

**LESSON PLANS
FOR
DATES AS SWEET AS HONEY**

GOALS:

Students will understand the centrality of Jerusalem and *Beit Hamikdash* in Jewish thought throughout history.

Students will learn what the Seven Species are.

AGES:

6 - 10 years old

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE (S):

Linguistic,

MATERIALS NEEDED:

A copy of **Dates as Sweet as Honey**, by Betty Ann Ross, published by the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York

DIRECTIONS: FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN (up to 7 or 8 years old)

- A. Before reading the story, ask
 1. How long ago can you remember?
 2. What do you know about what happened a very long time ago?
 3. Tell students that the story they are about to hear is about things that happened long ago and also about now.
- B. Read the story. Since you are reading it during the time before Shavuot, it is suggested that you substitute as below.
 1. For "On Tu Bishvat, children in Israel plant trees...that grow in Israel",

substitute: “On Shavuot, we remember the very big, very beautiful, very special Beit Hamikdash.”

2. For “On Tu Bishvat, we sing and have a party. And at our party we eat lots of delicious food”, substitute: “On Shavuot, we study together and eat lots of delicious food.”
- C. After reading the story the class can prepare a mural of Jews all over the world, or of the Seven Species, or of Jerusalem and Beit Hamikdash, or any other topic suggested by reading the story.

DIRECTIONS: FOR OLDER CHILDREN: (9 - 10 years old)

- A. Before reading the book
1. Review the three Pilgrimage Festivals - Pesah, Shavuot and Sukkot. What was done on each that is similar? What is unique to each? Keep the discussion brief.
Similarity: commandment to go to Jerusalem
Uniqueness:
Pesah è Seder
Sukkot è Sukkah
Shavuot è students will probably not be sure
 2. Introduce the story. Tell students that they will have to figure out what holiday it was written about. As a clue, tell them it's **not** one of the three Pilgrimage Festivals.
- B. Read the story
- C. After reading the story ask the following questions
1. What place (city and structure) is mentioned as the center of Jewish observance.? (Jerusalem, Beit Hamikdash [the Holy Temple])
 2. Of the two answers in C1, which still exists as a focus in Jewish life today? (Jerusalem)
 3. What holiday is mentioned in the book? (Tu Bishvat)
 4. Is it one of the three Pilgrimage Festivals? (No)
 5. How would you rewrite the two pages referring to Tu Bishvat to make this a book for Pesah? For Sukkot?
 6. What customs are associated with Shavuot? (All-night study, decoration with greenery, dairy foods, cheesecake, blintzes, etc.)
 7. Rewrite the story to be a book for Shavuot.
- D. Optional: write your own story to be read to a younger group. Use the same form and style as in Dates as Sweet as Honey.